



HOWARD COUNTY TOURISM NEWS

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Blossoms of Hope to Participate in Parade of the National Cherry Blossom Festival® With Fifty Volunteers & Three 15ftx15ft Blossom Balloon Floats

Ellicott City, MD (March 22, 2006)— Howard County Tourism proudly announces that Blossoms of Hope: The Howard County Cherry Tree Project will participate in The Parade of the National Cherry Blossom Festival® in Washington DC on Saturday April 8, 2006 10:00AM-12:00PM. The Parade is Washington's largest annual spectator event, telecast live on NEWS Channel 8 and reaching over 1 million households.

Blossoms of Hope has sponsored three very special "pink cherry blossom" 15ftx15ft balloon floats for the parade and recruited fifty volunteers to walk the 10 block route on Constitution Ave with the balloon floats. The fifty volunteers will all wear matching PINK Blossoms of Hope T-shirts during the Parade.

The Howard County Executive James N. Robey and Mrs. Janet Robey (the Honorary Chair of Blossoms of Hope) will ride in the parade in a very special car provided by Apple Ford. Blossoms of Hope also provided 10 VIP parade grandstand tickets to cancer survivors and representatives of The Claudia Mayer Cancer Resource and Image Center, the projects' beneficiary, to enjoy the parade.

Participation in the Parade of the National Cherry Blossom Festival® will help publicize and promote Blossoms of Hope: The Howard County Cherry Project to a world-wide audience. The project was announced in September 2004 by Howard County Executive James N. Robey "It is a project that is designed to not only enhance the county's existing attractions but also provide a foundation upon which future tourism opportunities can be built. It is a vision out of which a new, unique, county-wide spring celebration may take shape-- one that may ultimately become a signature event for Howard County and maybe even the State. It is a vision we are calling Blossoms of Hope: The Howard County Cherry Tree Project."

Blossoms of Hope's ultimate goal---1,000 pink kwanzan cherry trees across Howard County, blossoming simultaneously each April – to beautify and beckon people to visit and experience the many attractions found throughout the county. The beauty, however, of the Blossoms of Hope campaign goes far beyond the trees' annual display of color. Like the name suggests, this project is also about hope—the hope to individuals and families within the community who are coping with cancer. Not only will tree sponsors be playing a significant role in helping to beautify Howard County, a portion of the sponsorship fee will be donated to Howard County's Claudia Mayer Cancer Resource and Image Center.

To date, nearly 500 pink kwanzan cherry trees have been planted on public land (parks, libraries, lakes, community centers and historic sites), corporate partners' land and along State Highways in Howard County as part of the Blossoms of Hope tourism initiative. Howard County Tourism officials hope that the project will be a spring tourism draw similar to that of Washington's cherry blossoms.

Howard County Tourism, Inc., is a non-profit, membership-based organization funded by generous grants from the State and the County. Our mission is to increase, develop and promote tourism in Howard County by featuring the county's unique sites, services, products and people. For more information contact Howard County Tourism or check out our website www.VisitHowardCounty.com.